PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS

I. On Alcoholism and the South African tribe. (See p. 46)

733 The craving of the Bantu of South Africa for alcohol is by no means a result of civilisation. The race, being of a weak character, has always given way to drunkenness. Deprived of true religious and moral principles, it was exposed, as all primitive races are, to the excesses of that dangerous passion. The beer-drinking parties are as old as the tribe itself, or at any rate, as ancient as the introduction of cereals !

But it must be confessed that civilisation has developed this natural instinct to a terrible degree. In former times, Natives were able to get intoxicated from time to time, the chiefs more frequently than their subjects, owing to the shirwalo taxation (I. p. 405). But the brewing took nine days, and in the meantime the inmates of the village were obliged to keep sober. Now all that is changed. Where the law does not prohibit the sale of liquor to Natives, they can buy as much as they like at all times ; some of them are therefore constantly under the influence of drink as long as they have money to purchase it, and the progressive alcoholisation of the entire population is already to be observed. I lived for many years in a Colony where there is no liquor law. Formerly German rum was sold all over the country by thousands of flagons, and I even saw children drinking it with avidity, although they shivered whilst swallowing the deadly drug ! Later on it was prohibited and replaced by what is called "Vinho colonial", which, however, was no great improvement. According to the late E. Torre do Valle, a great friend of the Ba-Ronga, who strongly deprecated this liquor trade, it is an adulterated mixture in which tobacco, India-pepper, etc. are used to give pungency to the taste, and containing but little natural wine. When a White man enters an upcountry store and wants something to drink, the Banyan who retails this mixture from three barrels standing on the end of the counter, refuses to serve him with it, saying : "This is for Natives and not for White men". Round Lourenço Marques there are hundreds of such bars, and although the Authorities have tried to diminish their number, the drunkenness in the Native Location is terrible and almost incredible in extent. Let the visitor go on Saturday night or Sunday along the avenues of Majlanganen (I. p. 206), where the galvanised iron stores extend without interruption in all directions, and observe the women, men, youngsters dancing on the road in front of the

733 bars, falling on the ground, spending their last penny to get drink beneath the eyes of the amused storekeeper, and he will realise what the unrestricted sale of drink to the Blacks means. It is simply horrible to contemplate ; morally it is a most reprehensible, economically a most deplorable, physically a most dangerous state of things. I shall not deal here with the moral side of the question ; let us merely consider what is the effect of this liquor trade on the health and on the economic future of the Black race.

1) There can be no doubt that it *kills* hundreds of Natives. Whatever stamina the race may possess, it cannot long resist the deadly effects of an inferior, unwholesome type of liquor absorbed in such enormous quantities. Coffee must be *kweba*, drunk in sips, but wine according to Natives, must be *nwa*, viz., drunk "à plein gosier" like water ! We saw the young chief Shongele, heir of the Klosen clan, son of Magudju, die a miserable death from delirium tremens, and many other chiefs and sub-chiefs followed his example. For years they led a disgusting life, half drunk all the time, no longer able to preside over the tribal court, or to govern their people, having entirely lost the dignity of manner and the sense of position which was so remarkable amongst Bantu rulers, clapping their hands and abjectly entreating the White visitor to give them *sope* (the Native name for brandy).

[164] Hand in hand with drunkenness goes immorality, and immorality as practised in that hell means the unchecked propagation of syphilis. According to medical authority, ninety per cent of the Natives round the town of Lourenço Marques are now contaminated. The girls who come on Saturday to sell their produce in the market and sleep two nights in the Native town, give themselves, for a few pence, to one of the hundreds of boys working on the wharf, and thus propagate the disease in the interior, and all this means the rapid destruction of a race which was made for life, and has great possibilities before it.

During the war of 1894, a merchant in the town of Lourenço Marques said to me cynically : "The Natives are a nuisance ! Let them be given as much alcohol as they want and we shall soon get rid of them."

2) Alcohol will kill the Black race in the long run. It is already *ruining the kafir trade*. Those who uphold the liquor traffic, in order to increase the Revenue of the Colony, ought to obtain the opinion of the traders who do not deal in liquor. These merchants, who try to create new wants, to develop a healthy and useful trade amongst Natives, in a word to civilise them, would testify that selling strong drink to the Natives prevents their buying anything else. The craving for

alcohol is such that they spend all their money on it and no longer care for clothing, better food, ploughs, live stock, etc. The *consuming power* of the Black race as regards European goods, which might become enormous, is thus curtailed ; and at the same time its capacity for work is destroyed. When drink was allowed to be sold in the Compounds of Johannesburg, the Mine Managers soon found that a third of their Black workers were constantly in a state of intoxication and unfit to go down into the mine. So the sale was happily stopped, not so much on moral as on purely practical grounds. 733

So, if we study the question seriously, we are forced to the conclusion that total prohibition of European liquor, and any similar product, is the one chance of salvation for the Natives. I know of only two classes of people who would oppose this conclusion : the liquor traders — whose judgment is not disinterested — and some educated Natives, and negrophiles, who resent any colour legislation and think such prohibition an insult to the Black race. There is no need to reply to the former. Let them consider the heavy responsibility which they incur when they enrich themselves by slowly killing a primitive, childish race which has not enough moral force to resist the danger ! To the second I would say : "Even if some of you have in reality attained that moral status in which you can use and not abuse your liberty, you must confess that your race, as a whole, has not yet reached this level. A great number of the best Native Christians have fallen irretrievably and been lost owing to the passion for drink ; how much more defenceless are the rank and file, raw heathen or weak Christians ! Accept the testimony of facts and recognize that the Black race, just emerging from savagery, is still in a state of moral infancy and must be treated with great consideration. Later on, let us hope, the time will come when it will have grown in strength and moral vigour, and no legal restrictions will be required."

As regards *Native drinks*, the use of *byala*, strong beer, is generally prohibited in Christian Congregations. Some Missions also exclude light beer, *buputju*, whilst some (amongst them the Swiss Romande Mission) allow it. *Buputju* proper, the Suto *leting*, is not very objectionable, containing but little alcohol ; but I have already pointed out the great difficulty of establishing a clear line of demarcation between buputju and byala. Our experience is that Native Christians readily approve the prohibition of byala... but, after a while, they begin to brew a buputju which is almost the equivalent of it, and the morality of their congregations sinks in proportion to the increase of alcohol in

733 their drink. So, in a Synod held in Shiluvane in 1908, the question was earnestly discussed during a whole day. The following were the confessions made by the delegates "We have deceived our leaders! What we drink is byala, and not buputju! We ourselves, the elders, are drinking and leading the others into temptation ; thus we give strength to the beer. The beer is the hyena. It kills the soul ! It kills the work of salvation! Let it die once for all, the wild beast. Let a knife be provided to cut the throat of the wild beast", viz., let strict regulations be adopted to prevent drunkenness in the Church.

When Natives arrive at such a conviction of the danger of alcohol for their race, and take up such a position in regard to their own beer, should not we Whites be greatly to blame if we increased their difficulties by providing them with European drinks which are ten times more dangerous for them!

At the International Conference on Alcoholism which took place in Geneva, 1st to 3d September 1925, regulations for the Colonies were discussed and I had the honour of putting forward the following suggestions, especially as regards Mozambique ; they were supported by Gen. A Freire d'Andrade, the Portuguese delegate to this Conference.

"The ideal would be total prohibition of any foreign alcoholic liquor, as Natives already possess sufficient national drinks. If, however, it is felt to be impossible to adopt such a radical measure at the present time, the following restrictions are suggested, bearing on two categories of drinks, imported drinks and those manufactured in the Colony.

First Category. Imported drinks.

a) Prohibition of importation and sale of all *distilled* liquors.

b) Prohibition of adulterated wines, prepared for Native consumption (trade spirits, vinho colonial).

c) Compulsory analysis of all *fermented* drinks offered for sale and prohibition of all those which contain more than 12 % of alcohol and of those which are of a harmful character.

Second Category. Drinks manufactured in the Colony.

a) Prohibition of distillation of any liquors destined for consumption, whether manufactured by European or Native processes.

b) Periodical examination by the Sanitary Service of the Colony of all fermented drinks manufactured by Europeans or Natives, and prohi-

2: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

bition of those which are prejudicial to public health, whether on account of a too high percentage of alcohol, on account of their mode of manufacture, or on account of the physical and moral disorders which they produce."

These proposals were favourably received by the Committee for the Colonies, but no vote was taken on details, only a general resolution being passed. It is clear that these recommendations are intended for the whole Native population. In the domain of the Church we should go much further, as pointed out above.

II. On the Problem of Native Education.

The study which we have made of the Bantu Intellect in Part V has paved the way for a consideration of this great question, which is one of the most important features of the Native problem in South Africa.

The wild buffalo has been made prisoner! A yoke has been placed on its neck. — The savage mind of the Bantu is now being trained to civilised methods, and the Elementary School gathers in the goatherds of the bush, all over South Africa. More than 220,000 children are attending a course of instruction. The wild buffalo has bowed its neck to the yoke with wonderful readiness! It is one of the promising features of the present situation of the Black race that it has so quickly accepted the school. This acceptance proves its vitality; it understands that the acquisition of knowledge is, for it, the only way of adapting itself to altered circumstances. So, though primary education has nowhere yet been made compulsory, children are leaving their flocks and learning reading, writing, and arithmetic. This phenomenon is universal, and is to be observed not only in the towns, where big boys of twenty or thirty years of age crowd to the evening schools, patiently writing letters on slates with clumsy fingers, but in the most remote parts of the country, wherever a missionary or a Native teacher opens a school.

This spread of instruction is bound to have great results for the future of the race, and its intellectual development; it is therefore of the utmost importance that rational and wise methods should be adopted in the conduct of this work, in order to help rather than injure the Bantu mind. Unfortunately it cannot be said that such has always been the case in past times. To avoid mistakes and errors I beg to put forward the following suggestion as to the first principle of Native Education.